DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 155 234 UD 017 900

AUTHOR Zubrzycki, Jerzy
TITLE Australia as a Multicultural Society.
INSTITUTION Australian Ethnic Affairs Council, Canberra.
PUB DATE Aug 77
NOTE 22p.; Report submitted to the Australian Population and Immigration Council on the Green Paper, Immigration Policies and Australia's Population

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Involvement; *Cultural Pluralism; Economic Factors; *Ethnic Groups; Government Role; *Immigrants; *Migrant Education; Minority Groups; Non English Speaking; *Policy Formation; Population Trends
IDENTIFIERS *Australia

ABSTRACT

This document was written in response to the Green Paper "Immigration Policies and Australia's Population." Various philosophies underlying and social policies implied by the identified issues of social cohesion, equality, and cultural identity are examined. An attempt is made to establish guidelines for immigration and settlement policies appropriate to a multicultural Australia. It is shown how these guidelines apply in the three areas embraced by the committees of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council: settlement, community consultation and ethnic media, and education. Ways in which current settlement procedures continue to subvert egalitarian processes are outlined. Policy proposals are offered for the education of non English speaking adults and children. The need for rigorously assessing the demands of the Australian economy, as well as the country's capacity to absorb immigrants is stressed. (Author/GC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED155234

THE AUSTRALIAN ETHNIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Australia as a Multicultural Society

Submission to the Australian Population and Immigration Council on the Green Paper, Immigration Policies and Australia's Population

AUGUST 1977

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. A. Henderson

Australian Ethnic Affairs Council

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

UD017900

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING SERVICE
CANBERRA 1977

© Commonwealth of Australia 1977

ISBN 0 642 83286 6

Printed in Australia by The Courier-Mail Printing Service, Campbell Street, Bowen Hills, Brisbane, Q. 4006.

AUSTRALIAN ETHNIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL
C/- Department of Immigration
and Ethnic Affairs,
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600

15 September 1977

My dear Minister,

I have the honour to transmit with this letter a submission of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council on the Australian Population and Immigration Council's Green Paper *Immigration Policies and Australia's Population*. We have prepared the submission in response to your directive issued on the occasion of my Council's first meeting in March 1977.

In preparing this submission on behalf of the Council I have had the benefit of assistance by and collaboration of Dr Jean Martin, Senior Fellow in Sociology at the Research School of Social Sciences of the Australian National University. Dr Martin, a distinguished scholar in the sociology of migration and a former Chairman of the Committee of Social Studies of the Australian Population and Immigration Council, served as consultant to my Council for the purpose of evaluation of the Green Paper.

In order to meet the short deadline for submissions on the Green Paper, the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council resolved at its second meeting of June 6 to delegate the task of preparing the final draft of the submission to Dr Martin and myself subject to it being vetted by the Chairman of the Council's three Committees. The Committees held initial discussions on the Green Paper on 7 June and subsequently devoted one full meeting to the submission in late June or early July. Full reports of these meetings were made available to Dr Martin and myself and served as a basis of the present paper.

In preparing the submission we have not tried to summarise the diverse views of Council members nor to present simply the matters on which there is agreement. Instead we have written the paper informed by the thinking of Council members and our separate experience in the study of and participation in ethnic affairs. I have circulated a draft of the submission to the Chairmen of the Council's functional Committees and asked them to examine it critically with special reference to the actual proposals and recommendations in the three areas embraced by the Committees: settlement programs, community consultation and ethnic media, and multicultural education. I am happy to say that as a result of this procedure the present paper not only has the authority of the whole Council, but the specific endorsement of Committee Chairmen in its entirety. It can therefore be regarded as the Council's initial formal response to the Green Paper to be followed by further consideration and recommendations regarding the wide range of issues raised in the submission which fall under our terms of reference.

Yours sincerely,
JERZY ZUBRZYCKI

The Hon. M.J.R. MacKellar, M.P.
Minister for Immigration and
Ethnic Affairs,
Parliament House,
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600

AUSTRALIAN ETHNIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

Chairman

Professor J. Zubrzycki, M.B.E.

Members

Mr H.G. Ackaoui
Mr L.H. Colbourne
Mrs E.M. Di Stefano
Mr M. Dontschuk
Ald. W. Jegorow, M.B.E.
Mr E.I. Kainu
Dr S. Kaldor
Mrs T.H. Karabatsas
Mr U. Larobina
Mr B.M. Noakes
Mr G. Papadopoulos
Mr G.N. Pappas
Rev. G. Sakellariou, M.B.E.
Mr E.G. Salomon
Mr G.V. Scomparin
Rabbi U. Themal
Professor C.G. Veliz
Mr A.M. Vella
Mrs H.E. Verolme
Mr R.Y. Wing
Mr E.A. Witts
Mr C.V. Zaccariotto
Mrs J. Zammit

Executive Officer

Mr R.A. Henderson

CONTENTS

		Page
Introduction		4
PART A	— Guidelines	5
	Social Cohesion	5
	Equality	5
	Cultural Identity	5
PART B	— The Application of Guidelines	9
	Settlement	9
	(i) The present situation	9
	(ii) Proposals for policy	9
	Education of Adults of Non-English-Speaking Origin	10
	(i) The present situation	10
	(ii) Proposals for policy	10
	Education of Children	11
	(i) The present situation	11
	(ii) Proposals for policy	12
	Community Consultation of Ethnic Media	13
	(i) The present situation	14
	(ii) Proposals for policy	14
PART C	— The Implications of Multi-Culturalism for Immigration policy	15
CONCLUSION		15
REFERENCES		19

INTRODUCTION

Our response to the Australian Population and Immigration Council's important Green Paper, *Immigration Policies and Australia's Population*, takes the form of an attempt to establish guidelines for immigration and settlement policies appropriate to a multicultural Australia. Directing our attention particularly to Chapter 7 of the Green Paper, we show in very general terms how these guidelines apply in the three areas embraced by the committees of the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council: settlement, community consultation and ethnic media, and education.

We have addressed only those issues over which the Commonwealth has or could have some measure of control through the direct provision of services (e.g. social welfare), through regulative legislation (e.g. anti-discrimination legislation) or through the offer of incentives or support for particular lines of action (e.g. grants for innovative programs or research in education). Limited in this way, the discussion covers only selected aspects of what a multi-cultural Australia means, but it is, we hope, focussed on questions which are already, or might properly become, the subject of government action.

Since there is no generally agreed upon terminology for use in this kind of discussion, some preliminary definitions are needed. Like most other societies, Australia is composed of a majority population from a roughly homogeneous ethnic background and a number of minority populations; the established institutions reflect and confirm the various interests, ways of life, values and world views of the majority. We use the term Anglo-Australian for this majority population and culture, though recognising of course that this term embraces class, regional, religious and other kinds of internal differentiation. We describe as 'ethnic' the people who form the minority populations of non-Anglo-Australian origin and their institutions; apart from the Aborigines, the overwhelming majority of ethnics in Australia are migrants or the children of migrants. Where language differences between ethnics and Anglo-Australians are particularly relevant, we use terms like 'of non-English-speaking origin' or 'non-English speakers'. The term 'migrant' appears only where the fact of 'migrancy' as compared with 'ethnicity' is significant for the matter under discussion.

PART A. GUIDELINES

The Green Paper highlights the three key social issues which confront Australia today as the outcome of migration policies that in thirty years have changed our predominantly Anglo-Australian population into an ethnically diverse one. For brevity these issues can be called *social cohesion*, *equality* and *cultural identity*. They are interrelated, but the philosophies underpinning them and the social policies they imply are not always the same and may even be inconsistent with one another.

Social cohesion. It is easier to say what social cohesion is not than what it is. It is not the same as homogeneity nor does it imply absence of dissensus, confrontation and conflict, which are integral to any democratic society. It does imply *accepted institutional arrangements for allocating social resources and for dealing with conflict over what are social resources and over what the basis for such allocation should be.* As used here, the term thus embraces the concept of the 'social good', the use of social resources towards the well-being of the society as a whole rather than sectional groups within it. Although we do not develop the issue in this paper, we also wish to emphasise that question of immigration policy (like many other questions) are embedded in a much wider concept of social cohesion than this: namely, the 'social good' of humanity as a whole. From this point of view, Australia may be a sectional group in a wider international system and the good of the wider system may override the well-being of Australia considered in isolation.

Equality. The crux of our argument is that Australia is already a society of multiple cultural identities, or a multicultural society, and that equality can best be promoted (perhaps can *only* be promoted) through policies that harness it to cultural identity. Both are means and both are ends: equality depends on and strengthens multiculturalism, multiculturalism depends on and strengthens equality. They are 'ends', however, only in the sense that they are the touchstones that guide our thinking and proposals, not in the sense that we see 'an equal society' or 'a multicultural society' as a tangible final social condition.

We shall treat equality *as equal access to social resources.* Equality in this sense means above all that individuals are neither advantaged nor prejudiced in their access to social resources by belonging to some category of the population that is irrelevant to the resource in question. Thus equality is denied where skin colour stops one person from getting a job or another from renting a house. It is also denied where sex, family wealth or place of residence gives one child a better education than another.

As the examples given above illustrate, besides ethnic origin there are many other bases for the kind of categorising that undermines equality. And even in an ethnically diverse society, other kinds of categorisation may be more important than ethnicity in determining the individual's access to social resources. Poor children from different ethnic backgrounds, for example, may be more alike in their access to education than children from the same background but in different economic circumstances. In the present context, however, we shall concentrate on categorisation by ethnic origin.

Cultural identity. Cultural identity is the *sense of belonging and attachment to a particular way of living* associated with the historical experience of a particular group of people. Multiculturalism exists where one society embraces groups of people with different cultural identities.

There are many kinds of multiculturalism and some are grossly incompatible with Australia's political and social system. In a simplified scheme we can say that multiculturalism develops by three principal processes:

(1) Cultural stratification. Socio-economic stratification coincides with ethnic stratification to produce a hieracy of cultural layers. Slave societies are the obvious and extreme example.

(2) Differentiation by cultural regions. Each geographical region has its own distinct culture: Switzerland is an example. (Regional differentiation may also be associated with stratification, as in Canada).

(3) Differentiation by cultural communities. Ethnic communities are the carriers of different cultures, but these communities do not form distinct regions nor distinct socio-economic strata. Australian society is multicultural in this sense.

In societies in which processes (1) and/or (2) predominate, different cultures are likely to be embodied in clearly distinct institutions. Each stratum or region is likely to have its own economic, religious and political institutions, for example, even though each must necessarily share in some common institutions if the society is to operate as a cohesive state.

Where process (3) is paramount, cultures may be institutionalised to very different degrees and in many different ways

(1) Culture equals folk art. Multicultural implies nothing more than the development (or often only the preservation) of the 'pretty' ethnic traditions — dancing, music, craft — with language and literature sometimes included, more often not. This is the only form of multiculturalism tolerated in Australia in the fifties and sixties and is, we believe, still the only safe kind in the eyes of many Australians. But ethnics often see this concept of multiculturalism as degrading and dehumanising.

(2) Cultural differentiation occurs largely in the private, invisible world of the family and personal relations. People of the same ethnic background marry and establish homes where they express and live out of their common ways and values, but to the extent that they participate in wider economic, religious or political institutions (which they may do in different degrees) they share the same institutions as everyone else. This kind of multiculturalism has always existed in Australia, but has become pervasive with the diversity of peoples who have migrated here in the past thirty years. By definition, the predominant Anglo-Australian section of the population is largely unaware that this is so, but inter-marriage and contacts made at work and socially spread some measure of awareness. In a society like ours with a strong tradition of respect for the privacy of the individual, cultural differences of this kind can persist over generations, with little organised effort directed to that end, but simply as the result of people living in the way that feels right, natural and comfortable to them.

(3) Cultural differentiation involves greater or lesser degrees of institutionalisation. That is, distinct cultural ways and values are embodied in institutions such as the church, welfare bodies, sports groups and ethnic schools. This kind of multiculturalism coincides with the institutionalisation that occurs with cultural stratification and regional differentiation, described above. It involves structural pluralism, that is, the existence of ethnic groups with continuity and some measure of autonomy. In our view, a major aim of

government policy in the 1950s and 1960s was to ensure that this kind of multiculturalism did *not* develop in Australia and many Australians still believe that the ethnic communities which it implies are a divisive force in the community and a threat to national cohesion. In their view ethnic communities are ghettoes, and they see no alternative to a common system of institutions for everyone, on the one hand, and destructive racial-ethnic conflict, on the other. In reality there is a large measure of ethnic institutionalisation in Australia (e.g. newspapers, churches, schools, kindergartens, aged persons homes), but there is much variation from one ethnic group to another. Size is not the decisive factor, since some small groups like the Latvians have a highly organised community life, while the largest group, the Italians, are far less institutionalised than the second largest, the Greeks.

Ethnic communities may exercise various degrees of control over their own institutionalisation, but the opportunities or encouragement they get are also the outcome of policies adopted by the established institutions. In simplified form, three kinds of policy are possible:

(1) Established institutions may adhere to a mode of organisation that denies the relevance of, or even the existence of, ethnic communities and therefore provides for the participation of ethnics either not at all, or only as individuals.

(2) Established institutions may be so organised that ethnically based groups are included among the units of which they are composed. The structure of the Catholic church in the United States, for example, provides for both territorial and national (i.e. ethnic) parishes.

(3) Established institutions may function or operate through ethnic communities, thus stimulating those communities to become institutionalised. The Grants to Community Agencies scheme, introduced by the Commonwealth in 1968 to enable community agencies to employ social workers to assist migrant clients, has had the effect of encouraging ethnic groups to organise themselves in order to be eligible for support under the scheme.

There is no necessary connection between type of multiculturalism and the way in which, or the degree to which, ethnic minorities have access to decision making and political power, although some types of multiculturalism are incompatible with some modes of political access. Three modes may be distinguished:

(1) Ethnicity is irrelevant to political access. The individual exercises political power through voting and through his membership of political parties or established institutions, like trade unions or professional associations, which cross-cut ethnic boundaries. This has always been the preferred approach in Australia, but is now challenged by some ethnic minorities on the grounds that it has resulted in the neglect of their interests and has thus increased inequality and denied cultural identity.

(2) Ethnic communities act as pressure groups, but do not, as such, seek to exercise political functions. They take their place alongside a variety of other pressure groups and there is overlapping membership between ethnic and other groups. From time to time ethnic groups in Australia have sought to exercise this function concerning particular issues (e.g. in the 1950s in particular, Eastern European groups lent their weight to support a strong anti-communist line by community and government), but it is only in the past five years or so that some have begun to operate as multipurpose pressure groups in support of a wide range of ethnic interests. To be more

effective they have followed familiar pressure group strategies and combined their forces in inter-ethnic bodies such as the Ethnic Communities Councils.

(3) Out of ethnic communities are formed the units (or some of the units) which compose the political structure.
In the extreme case political parties (or political sectors in a one-party system) represent particular ethnic interests. This is generally regarded as dangerous and alien to the Australian political system, although from time to time ethnic groups, particularly the Aborigines, claim that this is the only way their interests can be adequately represented.

Conclusion. In Australia at the present time different concepts of multiculturalism jostle for attention and different practices vie for resources. But acceptable concepts and practices fall within a fairly clearly definable range and their are some approaches, as we have indicated above, that are so alien that no-one regards them as a serious possibility. These unacceptable alternatives — which Australians see embodied in the destructive conflicts of Northern Ireland and the Middle East, for example — are important because they establish the limits of what Australians do and do not want.

Multiculturalism in Australia is thus not monolithic, but contains the seeds of many different kinds of future development. Whether government policy takes account of this situation or not, government decisions will have the effect of encouraging some developments and discouraging others. *We strongly urge that, in all matters connected with immigration policy, migrant settlement and ethnic affairs, the implications which any given policy has for equality and multiculturalism should be taken as seriously as implications for the economy.* This implies the need for over-all guidelines which incorporate these considerations, and in terms of which particular issues and questions can be dealt with.

It is important, however, that we should not give the impression that the relation between equality, cultural identity and social cohesion is a simple matter. On the contrary, decisions about policies and programs involve a continuous process of weighing one of these values against another and assessing how the pursuit of one promotes or jeopardises the pursuit of another. The experience of the United States has much to tell us, in particular, about the way in which a multicultural society the individual, though successful in socio-economic terms, may become trapped in his particular ethnic community if bridges into the dominant society are lacking, and how opportunities for social and political participation in the larger society may accordingly be denied him.

PART B. THE APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES

Settlement

This very broad heading covers a range of government activities and non-government activities which government supports or regulates in some way. The substantial amount of information available on settlement policies and processes leads us to the following basic conclusions, which can do no more than suggest a framework for considering this complex question.

(i) **The present situation.** Settlement procedures are changing in the direction of promoting *equality*, but they continue to subvert egalitarian processes in two main ways:

(a) Language. Non-English-speakers remain at a disadvantage in that their access to social resources is restricted by ignorance that services exist and by the failure of services to communicate effectively with them. These disadvantages occur not only in relation to government services, but also in the workplace, where, on the one hand, monolingualism commonly undermines the safety and participation of ethnic workers, but where, on the other, support for English language teaching has been minimal.

(b) Employment. Both because of a lack of the kinds of jobs appropriate to a multicultural society (e.g. interpreters) and because of non-recognition of overseas qualifications and poor facilities for transforming overseas into local qualifications, migrants — particularly from non-English-speaking countries — are in a disadvantaged position in terms of our equality yardstick. That is, considerations that are not intrinsic to the job in hand but are the concomitants of migrant/non-English-speaking status interfere with the individual's access to employment.

In terms of *cultural identity*, the present ethnic consciousness is an attempt to redress the imbalance of past policies, which gave, at best, token recognition to the existence of ethnic communities and their claims to be heard.

In the attempt to safeguard *social cohesion*, early post-war policies tried to prevent the development of ethnic communities and more recent policies have underplayed the structural implications of cultural pluralism. Policies of this kind are consistent with the aims and thinking of a number of ethnic groups: they appear to have given some groups all the leeway needed for the minimal degree of institutionalisation they wanted, while leaving them free at the same time to sustain communities based on personal networks and informal groups. In other cases, however, social cohesion has been undermined by the very processes that have been aimed at preserving it; that is, in some communities the non-recognition of ethnic groups in the settlement process has been a cause for silent resentment or has been advanced to justify aggressive claims for ethnic rights. Social cohesion is also undermined by inefficiencies and frustrations that come from the failure of government institutions to inform themselves about or respond to cultural and linguistic differences in the population and further by the waste of talent which this failure entails.

(ii) **Proposals for policy.** The major considerations to be taken into account in settlement policy are, we believe, these. Government institutions and services

should expand their multilingual capacity and develop more differentiated posts (the 'cultural interpreters' currently being trained by the Health Commission of New South Wales are an example) so that people of non-English-speaking background can gain more effective access to the established institutions which are intended for everybody. It is of major importance that this expansion should go on concurrently with the expansion of services specifically designed for people of non-English-speaking background (e.g. the Telephone Interpreter Service) and concurrently also with the more systematic incorporation of ethnic communities and media into the settlement process. These three parallel developments need to be seen as interdependent parts of the one process. All three are needed to ensure that the individual has options, and will find his way to the resources he needs by one route if not by another, and to ensure also that services function flexibly as well as efficiently.

Education of Adults of Non-English-Speaking Origin

(i) **The present situation.** Despite the programs for teaching English to adult migrants that have been in existence for thirty years, there is clear evidence that:

(a) Large numbers of migrants have been unable or unwilling to learn English through these programs.

(b) As a result, the community contains a substantial population of adults who do not know English, or who only know enough English to cope with the most obvious routines of everyday life, and who are neither trying nor expecting to learn more.

(c) Lack of knowledge of English disadvantages migrants in the workplace, whatever their occupational skills and experience, and deprives the Australian economy of the potential contribution of migrant workers.

In terms of our *equality* yardstick, egalitarian processes are undermined to the extent that the non-English-speaking migrant's access to work and social recources is adversely affected by a consideration — knowledge of English — that is not intrinsic to the job to be done or to the service required.

In terms of our yardstick of *cultural identity*, the concentration of people of certain ethnic origins in low socio-economic strata — which is associated with lack of knowledge of English — devalues and stigmatises that ethnic community in the eyes of the larger society and threatens the identity and self-esteem of its members.

In terms of our yardstick of *social cohesion*, the economy is deprived of full access to the migrant's skills and experience, and the devaluation of groups of non-English-speaking low status workers is a source of social tension.

(ii) **Proposals for policy.** To bring policy on the education of adults of non-English-speaking origin closer to our guidelines, we propose:

(a) A substantial increase in the availability of part-time and full-time courses for both residents and new arrivals.

(b) A substantial increase in financial incentives to non-English-speaking adults to attend full-time courses. The present high rate of unemployment

among migrants, particularly women, could be turned to some advantage if the rate of allowance paid to students attending courses did not place them at a disadvantage compared with recipients of unemployment benefit.*

(c) Employers be given financial incentives to encourage employees to take leave to attend full-time courses or to attend part-time courses while in employment.

(d) The methodology and techniques of teaching English to adult migrants be reviewed with the object of making them more effective in retaining students and in developing language proficiency.

(e) Methods of communicating information about English courses be reviewed with the object of recruiting more students and reaching groups, such as housewives, who make least use of the courses available.

Education of Children

The multicultural nature of Australian society has implications for education that go far beyond the concept of child migrant education, as embodied in the Child Migrant Education Program inaugurated by the Commonwealth in 1970, which was concerned solely with English classes for linguistically 'disadvantaged' children of non-English-speaking background. The basic implication — which we fully endorse — is that policies and programs concerned with education for a multicultural society apply to **all** children, not just children of non-English-speaking background, and have ramifications throughout the curriculum.

(i) **The present situation.** Although there is now a very considerable body of writing on the education of children of non-English-speaking origin in Australia, information on the school performance or even on the acquisition of basic skills of different ethnic groups is fragmentary and contradictory, methods of testing the abilities of children with little or no English competence have not been developed, and there is a lack of hard evidence on the association between the child's achievements and his sense of cultural identity (see Nicoll, 1977; Martin and Willcock, 1976). The weight of evidence, however, suggests that large numbers of children from non-English-speaking background under-achieve at school and leave school without the knowledge of English or other basic skills necessary for tertiary training. Without making unwarranted assumptions about the relation between school achievement and subsequent occupation or socio-economic status, we can say that, in terms of our yardstick of *equality*, children are being disadvantaged for reasons that intrinsically have nothing to do with their capacity to achieve at school (although in time, of course, repeated failure and frustration may undermine that capacity).

While, as indicated above, we know little about the association between the child's achievements and his sense of *cultural identity*, there is unequivocal evidence that the great majority of children of non-English-speaking origin find no support for their ethnic identity in school, and are in fact more likely to suffer because of it, and have no opportunity to use

* The second meeting of the Committee on Multicultural Education of the AECA agreed on a resolution to be passed to the full Council: 'That the living allowance for students attending full-time English language courses be increased to, and maintained at, a level equivalent to the unemployment benefit'.

or develop the language skills and knowledge that come from their particular ethnic background. Although this situation is slowly changing, and will change more quickly in the next few years, if the Schools Commissions' guidelines are followed through, it is still the situation of most children of non-English-speaking origin for most of their school years (See *Report on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools*, 1976).

Current criticism that the Child Migrant Education Program has been over assimilationist in its concentration only on English teaching (and remains so despite the transfer of the main provisions of the program to the control of the Schools Commission in 1976) suggests a *link between the issues of equality and cultural identity in child education.* The child of non-English-speaking background is handicapped in school achievement because (if for no other reason) he is required to learn the basic skills of reading and writing in English rather than in his mother tongue. According to this argument, both equality and cultural identity are served by bilingual education for children who enter primary school fluent in some language other than English (we use the phrase 'fluent in some language other than English' to emphasise the positive value placed on the language ability that the child *has* acquired, in preference to 'with little or no knowledge of English', which defines him as deficient). In terms of our yardstick of *social cohesion*, the policy and practice that predominated until recently, and are still influential, have resulted in a waste of ability among children of non-English-speaking background and have at worst encouraged, and at best done nothing to ameliorate, tensions among such children, and between them and Anglo-Australians, and tensions between these children and their parents.

(ii) **Proposals for policy.** To bring the education of children of non-English-speaking background closer to our guidelines, we put forward the following proposals. These proposals are not based on the naive assumption that educational reform will produce an egalitarian society; they represent simply the minimal response that seems to us compatible with the value of equality, on the one hand, and cultural identity, on the other. Insofar as they are proposals for action by schools, they are based on the assumption that schools have an increasing degree of autonomy and are not to be 'directed' to do this or that.

(a) The expansion of intensive English language centres where newly arrived students can study English full-time before entering school, or which students already in school can elect to attend during vacations or by taking time out from school.

(b) The review of Teaching of English as a Second Language teaching theories and methods, with the aim of reintegrating students and teachers into the school system and providing more effective English teaching and continuous evaluation of students' experience and performance.

(c) Schools (operating individually or in conjunction with other schools) be given incentives to develop bilingual education for students who enter the school system fluent only in a language other than English.

(d) Schools (individually or in conjunction with others) be given incentives to develop community language education for children of non-English-speaking origin who wish to become or remain fluent in their mother-tongue and for children of English-speaking origin who wish to learn

another language as a community language in its own right or as preparation for later academic study of that language.

(e) Schools be given incentives to develop ethnic studies programs and to infuse the curriculum in general with the reality of the pluralist nature of Australian society, with the object both of enhancing the self-esteem of students of ethnic origin and giving *all* children a more authentic view of the nature of the society than the present mono-cultural education provides. It is important to note the interdependence of these two processes: the sense of identity of ethnic children will be defensive and inward-looking unless other children accept the validity of ethnic cultures and identities.

(f) Ethnic schools be given incentives to operate at a standard that will allow them to contribute effectively to the kind of multicultural education program outlined in the paragraph above.

Two further considerations flow from these first six proposals:

(g) Institutions responsible for teacher training and the in-service education of teachers be given incentives to recruit teachers of non-English-speaking background and to train all teachers to work in a multicultural and multilingual education system implied by the acceptance of the five proposals above.

(h) Materials development by the main national materials producing bodies, the Curriculum Development Centre and the Language Teaching Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Education, be reviewed to bring them into line with the above proposals and with what is actually happening in schools, where grass-roots materials are being produced and used and where the needs of the classroom teacher faced with students who know little or no English (not the English as a Second Language teacher) are probably the most urgent.

Community Consultation and Ethnic Media

With the exception of the *Final Report* of the Committee on Community Relations, presented in 1975, attempts to examine questions of community consultation and ethnic media are fragmented and ill-developed. There appear to us, therefore, at this stage, to be no grounds for going beyond the comprehensive study made by that Committee and we will limit ourselves to summarising the way in which the present situation measures up against our guidelines and indicating the areas in which action is most urgently needed.

(i) **The present situation.** Although we would not assert the converse of the Green Paper's claim that 'Relationships within Australian society between the various ethnic groups have been mostly positive and healthy' (1977: 54), we believe that it would be more accurate to say that harmony has been preserved largely because ethnic communities have kept to themselves. Ethnic groups and institutions, such as the ethnic press, have not been systematically drawn into the process of community consultation and decision making. Although this situation is changing, the less articulate and forceful groups are still ignored, and inequalities between groups are probably increasing. In general the *cultural identity* of ethnic groups has been unconfirmed rather than directly attacked.

Social cohesion has suffered in various ways. Ethnic groups have been alienated by the realisation that government does not take them seriously. Government services and activities are less efficient than they could be — and indeed generate endless problems for one another and for other bodies to deal with — because of failure to communicate with non-English-speaking populations and failure to avail themselves of the knowledge of ethnic situations and attitudes which ethnic groups and institutions could supply.

(ii) **Proposals for policy.** So far as proposals are concerned, we limit ourselves to two general points. First, for the promotion of equality, cultural identity and social cohesion, it is essential that people of non-English-speaking background have the opportunity to take part in *community consultation* as *both* individuals *and* members of ethnic groups. This means that, while an important channel of communication between government and non-English-speaking people is the ethnic community, it should never be assumed that all people of non-English background will want to communicate in this way. The ethnic press and ethnic radio should be encouraged to provide a forum for the individual point of view. Government bodies need to be much better geared to take into account and respond to communications in languages other than English than the Coombs Commission found them to be.

Secondly, we wish to emphasise that the development of better *intergroup understanding* — and the complementary avoidance of intergroup conflict — do not happen automatically. They require that government commit resources to programs of community participation and education, programs designed, as the Committee on Settlement Programs put it, 'to smooth the path between the ethnic communities, the new arrivals and the "host" community'. Examination of what kind of programs are appropriate in the Australian context is in an embryonic stage, but whatever form such programs take they will represent the cost that has to be paid to sustain the type of social cohesion that is consistent with both equality and cultural identity.

PART C. THE IMPLICATIONS OF MULTICULTURALISM FOR IMMIGRATION POLICY

Three sets of criteria determine immigration policy and the annual immigration target: the demands of the economy, the capacity of the country to absorb immigrants and international expectations and obligations. In the past the demands of the economy have overridden other considerations; 'capacity to absorb' has been taken into account only in gross and crude terms.

In these concluding remarks we will leave aside the question of international expectations and obligations, which opens up issues far beyond our present brief, and propose what we see as extremely important principles that 'capacity to absorb' should be assessed rigorously and comprehensively and that the demands of the economy and capacity to absorb should be considered as interdependent sets of criteria, or two sides of one coin.

The demands of the economy are many, but the one aspect that is particularly relevant to immigration is the labour market. Because the range of countries and population groups from which Australia can expect to attract migrants in the foreseeable future is very limited and because the flow of migrants will continue to be unpredictable except in the very short term, immigration in the future will be able to service manpower needs only in broad terms: that is, immigration may be controlled to the extent of adding so many members to the workforce, or to the extent of adding so many unskilled or qualified workers, but it cannot realistically be conceived as a means of filling particular immediate gaps in the workforce, except for comparatively small and specialised recruitment programs. We agree with the Green Paper that 'the major economic challenges lie in *long-term* prospects' (1977:73), but we note that the White Paper on Manufacturing Industry (1977) makes no reference to immigration as a factor in manpower policies relevent to manufacturing.

The most effective way in which *immigration can serve manpower needs is via migrant settlement and education policies.* Effective programs for teaching English to non-English-speaking adults take a major and unique contribution to manpower needs in three ways: by helping transform unusable skills into usable ones, by supplying the essential prerequisite for upgrading existing skills or acquiring new ones, and by promoting the overall mobility and flexibility of the workforce. Provisions for the recognition of overseas qualifications, for retraining and for adult apprenticeship and training are further measures which can be used in a predictable and co-ordinated way to bring immigration into harmony with manpower needs.

An emphasis on settlement and education policies as the means of integrating immigration with the economy, while downplaying the importance of specific occupational skills in the selection of migrants, has nevertheless one clear implication for selection. This is the implication that migrants of working age should be capable of *learning* English, which is a somewhat different approach from that of the Green Paper, with its emphasis on the advantages of migrants having a knowledge of English. Although it is extremely difficult to assess the capacity of non-English-speakers to learn English, to the best of our judgment literacy in the individual's mother tongue is a better predictor than any other criterion that can be realistically applied in the selection of migrants. All adult migrants *both men and women*, of working age should therefore be literate among intending migrants.

The requirement that migrants should be literate in their mother tongue gives only a partial answer to the question: how are migrants to be selected? Assuming that the

usual health and character standards of selection would be maintained, we consider that the other factor which should be given great weight is family membership.

In our judgment the available evidence suggests that adult migrants with families in Australia have less settlement problems than those who arrive alone, with no family already established here, and are less likely to return to their home country.

A selection policy which gives weight to family membership would, by implication, favour *family reunion*. We do not propose to go into details of how a family reunion policy, if decided upon, should be administered, but we wish to make six important points.

(1) At the present time no-one can offer anything better than an informed guess about the population increase that would result from a more liberal family reunion policy. *We therefore propose a gradual relaxation of the present severe restrictions.*

(2) Any family reunion policy which favoured some existing groups over others would create resentment and dissension and thus subvert social cohesion as well as departing from our equality guidelines. Family reunion is an end in itself and should not be distorted in the attempt to make it serve other purposes.

(3) From the AEAC discussions and from consultations with ethnic communities, it seems clear that migrant groups feel strongly about their right to family reunion. Any large-scale immigration intake that did not include a major family reunion component would cause much resentment and agitation.

(4) The Green Paper examines the argument that immigration policy should aim to build up the ethnic communities already established in Australia (on the grounds that these communities have the resources and institutions to assist the settlement of newcomers) in preference to encouraging or allowing greater diversification. An emphasis on family reunion would operate against the introduction of new ethnic groups into the country but would not necessarily favour the already large communities over the smaller. *We cannot see any moral or other grounds for gearing immigration policy to the existing size of ethnic communities.* A policy of favouring large groups over smaller would be contrary to our equality guidelines and would be based on the false and ahistorical assumption that small groups are less supportive of newcomers than large. Moreover there is no reason why groups which become large in the future should not develop the institutions and services which the larger groups have now.

(5) The Green Paper also asks: 'is it not easier to provide for the social needs of a population where the range of ethnic or cultural groupings is comparatively limited?' (1977:59). In reply, we would say that it is too late for such considerations to carry weight: there already exist single schools with pupils from over twenty countries, and hospitals and other services now face an immense diversity among their patients and clients. At the same time, this diversity has called forth some imaginative and highly promising responses (e.g. the TIS, education programs like Dr Marta Rado's bilingual materials, the mobile cultural interpreters being trained by the New South Wales Health Commission) and very much more can be done along these lines.

(6) The concern — often implied rather than expressed openly, but influential nevertheless — that family reunion policies will encourage the increase of

some less 'desirable' ethnic communities and reduce the predominance of the more 'desirable' (often equated with English-speaking) seem to us to be founded on myths and prejudices rather than the reality of how different groups actually live in the Australian community. Inadequate and fragmented as the evidence is, we believe that one firm conclusion is justified: on even a narrow range of crude criteria, like poverty, income, crime, mental illness and alcoholism, no one group consistently shows up more, or less, favourably than others; if one applied a wider range of criteria that included self-help, family stability, creativity, participation in community affairs and contributions to the workforce, evidence of the concentration of all virtues or vices in any one group would dissolve completely. The conclusion to *A Decade of Migrant Settlement* made the same point in different terms: 'among migrants born in any one country there is a wide range of experience and between groups there is more overlapping' (1976:127). We therefore wish to assert that, *in terms of the record of different ethnic groups, there is no justification for a policy of building up some ethnic groups already established in Australia in comparison with others.*

CONCLUSION

One of man's basic needs is a sense of belonging. The more secure we feel in one particular social context, the more free we are to explore our identity beyond it. Ethnic pluralism can help us overcome or prevent the insecurity, homogenisation and loss of personal identity of mass society.

Ethnic communities have a particular significance for migrants: they can provide a sense of belonging and of continuity with the past which gives newcomers a better chance to cope with a strange society than they would have as isolated individuals. Ethnic loyalties, however, need not, and usually do not, detract from wider loyalties to community and country. Indeed, in a cohesive multicultural society, national loyalties are built on ethnic loyalties.

We agree with the statement adopted at the UNESCO meeting on 'Cultural Pluralism and National Identity' (Calgary, Alberta, Canada, June 1977) that 'cultural pluralism is increasingly becoming a matter of conscious choice'. We believe, therefore, that *our goal in Australia should be to create a society in which people of non-Anglo-Australian origin are given the opportunity, as individuals or groups, to choose to preserve and develop their culture* — their languages, traditions and arts — *so that these can become living elements in the diverse culture of the total society, while at the same time they enjoy effective and respected places within one Australian society, with equal access to the rights and opportunities that society provides and accepting responsibilities towards it.*

In our view, an acceptance of the multicultural nature of Australian society implies that government and established institutions acknowledge the validity of ethnic cultures and respond in terms of ethnic beliefs, values and customs. Because of differences among minority cultures themselves and also because some minority values are totally inconsistent with fundamental values of the dominant Australian culture (e.g. the norm that the family takes the law into its own hands to redress a wrong done to one of its members), it would be nonsense to say that multiculturalism means that every culture is equally valued and equally legitimate. What it does mean is that the spokesmen for every culture should be heard, that they should have a chance to put their case in community debate, that they should be taken seriously

in high places. Among the groups that are 'in' (e.g. trade unions, employers, the established churches, the AMA), this dialogue goes on all the time; some groups win more often than others, but there is constant give and take, compromise and re-thinking. *Multiculturalism means ethnic communities getting 'into the act'.*

What we believe Australia should be working towards is not a oneness, but a unity, not a similarity, but a composite, not a melting pot but a voluntary bond of dissimilar people sharing a common political and institutional structure. In the words of the UNESCO statement referred to above, 'Cultural pluralism offers a framework for the full development of human potential, both at the individual and group level. It guarantees the cultural identity and social and cultural security of individuals and groups, while at the same time ensuring the enrichment of human experience and inter-cultural understanding'.

REFERENCES

Australian Population and Im.nigration Council *A Decade of Migrant Settlement: A Report on the 1973 Immigration Survey*. Canberra: AGPS, 1976.

Australian Population and Immigration Council *Immigration Policies and Australia's Population: A Green Paper*. Canberra: AGPS, 1977.

Committee on Community Relations. **Final Report.** Canberra: AGPS, 1975.

Martin, J.I. and Willcock, H.F., (eds). 'The Education of Migrant Children in Austtralia', in *Australian Immigration: A Bibliography and Digest No. 3, 1975, Part 2*. Canberra: Australian National University, 1976.

Nicoll, Paul. *Directions for Research in Migrant Education*. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Education, April 1977.

Report of the Committee on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools. Canberra: AGPS, 1976.

(R77/480) Cat. No. 77 6881 X